

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE EXPLORATION OF UTAH VALLEY  
AND THE STORY OF FORT UTAH

A Thesis  
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by  
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seed and cattle, traveling over the southern route which brought them through Utah Valley.<sup>4</sup>

During December, 1847, following the planting of his wheat and rye, Farley P. Pratt led an expedition through Utah Valley and adjacent valleys. In his autobiography he records:

1847

Some time in December, having finished sowing wheat and rye, I started, in company with a Brother Higbee and others, for Utah lake with a boat and fish net. We traveled some thirty miles without boat, etc., on an ox wagon, while some of us rode on horseback. This distance brought us to the foot of Utah Lake, a beautiful sheet of fresh water, some thirty-six miles long by fifteen broad. Here we launched our boat and tried the net, being probably the first boat and net ever used on this sheet of water in modern times. \*

We sailed up and down the lake on its western side for many miles, but had only poor success in fishing. We however, caught a few samples of mountain trout and other fish. After exploring the lake and the valley for a day or two, the company returned home, and a Brother Summers and myself struck westward from the foot of the lake on horseback on an exploring tour. On this tour we discovered and partly explored Cedar Valley . . . Tooele Valley . . . came to the southern extreme of Great Salt Lake and passing around . . . arrived in Salt Lake City--having devoted nearly one week to our fishing, hunting, exploring expedition.<sup>5</sup>

Activities in Utah Valley During 1848 and the Early Part of 1849. Erecting houses, planting crops, building roads,

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<sup>4</sup> "History of Provo," (Ms) op. cit., 1847.

<sup>5</sup> Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, (Chicago: Published for Pratt Bros. by Law, King, and Law, 1888) pp. 401-403.

etc., kept the settlers in Salt Lake Valley during 1848 too busy to make any definite plans toward colonizing Utah Valley. Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders were absent part of the time, going back to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and other points in the Central States. However, frequent visits were made by pioneers to Utah Valley in search of grazing lands and to trade with the Indians. One of these, Alexander Williams, soon after his arrival in Salt Lake City in 1848 with his son Thomas S. went "south into Utah Valley to trade with the Indians on the banks of the Provo River; returning to Salt Lake (he) . . . asked President Young's permission to return and colonize on the Provo River."<sup>6</sup>

On January 6, 1849, the L.D.S. Church Presidency selected Amasa M. Lyman, Orrin P. Rockwell, George D. Grant, Jedediah M. Grant, David Fullmer, John S. Fullmer, Lewis Robinson, Dimick B. Huntington, William Crosby and George W. Boyd in Salt Lake City to go "To Utah Valley to learn its capabilities for a stock range and that when the cattle went, forty or fifty men should go with them." At the same time, "Isaac M. Higbee, John S. Higbee and William Wadsworth (were to) constitute a committee to seek out suitable fishing places in the Utah Lake, establish fisheries and supply the

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<sup>6</sup> Epsy Jane Williams, "Autobiography of Epsy Jane Williams Pace" (unpublished record dictated to Lucy A. W. Pace. Original in possession of Mrs. Sidney Pace, Orem, Utah.) p. 1.



market."<sup>7</sup>

Amasa Lyman returned to Salt Lake City January 12 and advised President Young against taking cattle to Utah Valley at that time.<sup>8</sup> Evidently, drawing this conclusion, from the thieving inclination of the Indian inhabitants of that Valley.<sup>9</sup>

President Young, however, was not discouraged. The parent colony now numbered about 5,000 souls,<sup>10</sup> and it was sufficiently replenished by immigration to sustain his colonization plan.

During the early part of February 1849, O. B. Huntington, accompanied by Barney Ward and Joseph Mathews, as referred to in the previous chapter, while traveling through the Utah Valley, gives an enlightening description. Quoting from his journal, he says:

We . . . crossed the point of the mountain which separates Salt Lake from Eutah Valley near where the Eutah outlet or River Jordan passes through the mountain which separates the two valleys. Here the snow though light rendered it difficult of ascending and descending. In the Eutah Valley we found it the same as in the Salt Lake Valley at the north and considerable snow and at the south end none at all. 15 miles from crossing the point of the mountain brought us to American Creek or Fork as some call it, emptying into the Eutah Lake.

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<sup>7</sup> L. D. S. Journal History, op. cit., January 6, 1849.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., January 12, 1849.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., February 27, 1849; March 6, 1849.

<sup>10</sup> Edward W. Tullidge, "History of Provo," Tullidge Quarterly Magazine, 3:233., July 1884.

At this time there was a family who had started for Oregon or California, their team had failed too much when they arrived in Salt Lake Valley late in the fall, to proceed farther that season. They with a few Mormons who had a large herd of cattle and a mountaineer who was part Indian and part Spaniard and could talk either language better than English, had come here to winter. The owners of the cattle for the sake of the excellent feed, and Parbleau the Spaniard and Indian mountaineer for the sake of trading with the natives. The few white men that are in that country carry on a great trade among the natives, of such articles as guns, ammunition, knives, arrowpoints, belts, blankets, tin and sheet iron, kettles, cups and cans, paints, beads and various other articles suiting the Indian taste . . .

O.  
B.  
Huntington

We left them then and went on 18 miles and crossed Provo River, the bottom lands of which are covered with large cottonwood, boxelder, ash, oak and maple. Five or six miles from there, south, we came to a small creek which had no name until we stayed there over night and I lost a pair of iron hobbles used for fastening the forefeet of horses together. We called it Hobble Creek and it afterwards went by that name . . . . Ten miles the next day brought us to an Indian Village at the extreme south end of the Utah Valley.<sup>11</sup>

Skirmish at Battle Creek. Although not directly involved with the exploration of Utah Valley and the founding of Fort Utah, a description of the skirmish with the Indians at Battle Creek during the early part of March 1849 should help to advance the general theme of this paper.

On February 27, of that year a report reached Salt Lake City that some renegade Indians from Utah Valley had stolen fourteen horses from Orr's herd and several cattle

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<sup>11</sup> O. B. Huntington, op. cit., Part II. pp. 48-49.

*[Faint handwritten notes, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.]*

Notes of Alexander Williams



The Families Are Brought to the Fort. In May, 1849, as soon as the Fort was constructed, in fact some of the buildings may not have been entirely completed, the colonists brought their families to the new settlement.<sup>40</sup> The following is a list, given by E. W. Tullidge, in his "History of Provo" of those who composed the first colony:

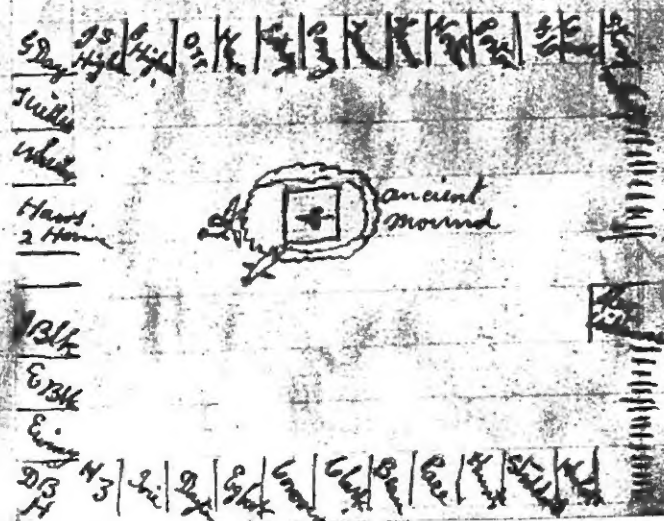
John S., Isaac, Charlotte, Hannah, Joseph, Emma, Minerva, and Sophia Higbee; John D. Carter; George Day; John, Martha, Merril, Thomas, Margaret, Wesley, Samuel, John, Luce A., and Joseph Wheeler; John, Julia A., John, Jr., and Elizabeth Blackburn; Dimick E., Lot, Clark, and Clarina Huntington; Samuel, William H., Adeline N., John J., Samuel, Jr., and Anderson S. Ewing; James R., Eliza M., William F., John J., Polly Ann, Elizabeth C., Joseph O., Eliza, Isaac T., Benjamin M., Hyrum S., Richard A., Elizabeth, and Lucinda M. Ivie; William A., Sarah and Nancy M. Dayton; Robert and Sarah Egbert; Samuel, Rebecca, Joseph, Riley G., John, Mary, Jane, Ann, Samuel, and Ellen Clark; Miles, Sarah, Franklin E., Christian R., and Franklin E., Jr., Weaver; James, Elizabeth, George W., James A., and Elizabeth Bean; William, Margaret, William B., Harvey., John A. and Parley F. Pace; Alexander, Isabella, Epsy Jane, Clinton, Nathaniel G., William A., Archibald and Seth Williams; John, Lucinda, Jane Mary A., Marian and Louise Park; Chauncey, Hannah F., John W., Harriet M., Julia and Henry N. Turner; R. T. and Mary Ann Thomas; Jabez, Amantha and Jabez, Jr. Nowland; George, Margaret, Mary and Jeanette Corey; James B., Eliza, Eliza Jr., George and Martha Porter; Thomas, Catherine, Isabelle and Mary Ann Orr; Gilbert, Hannah, Francis, Amos W., William, Albert and Caleb Haws; Walter and Caroline Barney; Thomas and Sarah Willis; Peter, Abram, Charles, Lucinda, Sarah, John and Catherine Cownover; James, Mary and Elisha Goff; Ger-sham C., Susan, John, Elizabeth and Melinda James; James P. Hiram; Jefferson, Joseph and John Hunt; Chauncey W., J. E. and Lewis A. West; Henry Rollins; George and Eliza Pickup; Elijah E., Catherine and Sarah Holden.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> G. W. Bean, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> E. W. Tullidge, op. cit., p. 270.

from several weeks, every year  
 there were some additions made to our  
 population during the summer & in the  
 fall when the Indian trouble broke out  
 we were situated in the fort about  
 as follows.



A Photostatic Copy of the Cabin Location in Fort Utah on  
 Its First Site from George W. Bean's Journal, Page 71

The Indians were anxious for arms & am-  
 munition & various merchandises to barter  
 for their skins & furs & horses & such things  
 they had, sometimes Buffalo robes, as the  
 Utes were an enterprising race generally  
 once a year to the Eastern plains to kill Buffalo  
 & in winter had made incursions into  
 southern & northern robbing the ranches of thousands  
 of horses. The cause of these raids being based on the  
 fact that some of Chief Wallace's party were  
 ago by Capt. A. Hancock taking their stock &  
 Indian children & property to their property  
 & destruction, the settlers no doubt acting under  
 trade & intercourse but that was not the  
 of Utah land. In this way Wallace  
 of Utes had accumulated many horses  
 & the brethren here started up a trade  
 the natives - notably Alex. Wallace  
 & L. B. Huntington. our sister  
 & L. B. Huntington. our sister  
 & L. B. Huntington. our sister



John E. Booth in his "History of the Provo Fourth Ward" adds the following names:

(Doc) John R. Stoddard; Shelburn Stoddard; James Mathias; \_\_\_\_\_ Strong; John Orr and family; Houghton and Alpheus Conover; Henry Zabriskie; Hannah, Emma, Minerva, Clara and Lottie Carter; Jabez Blackburn and family; and Thomas Willis.<sup>42</sup>

George W. Bean in his original journal (thus far his autobiography compiled by his daughter Flora Bean Horne has been quoted) states, "There were some additions made to our population during the summer & in the fall when the Indian trouble broke out. We were situated in the fort about as follows." He then drew the sketch reproduced in the photostat enclosed in this thesis<sup>43</sup> of the location of the cabins in the first site of Fort Utah. This is the only drawing of this type known to the writer.

According to his drawing the families appear to be as ~~as~~ follows:

Alexander Williams (East Gate Keeper), Hulet, Stoddard, Hunt, Pace, Bean, Clark, Conover, Egbert, Dayton, Ivie, HZ(Zabriskie), DBH (Huntington), Ewing, E Blk (Blackburn), J Blk (Blackburn), Haws, Wheeler, T Willis G Day, J S Higbee, I Higbee, Orr, Haws, Eldridge, Parry, Turner, Thomas, Norton, Porter, G C Case, Strong and Mathews.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> J. E. Booth, op. cit., pp. 1-4.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. post, p. 70.

<sup>44</sup> George W. Bean, "George W. Bean Journal" (unpublished journal in possession of his daughter Flora Bean Horne, Salt Lake City, Utah) Book IV, p. 71.